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# LLOYD GEORGE

A Man of the People

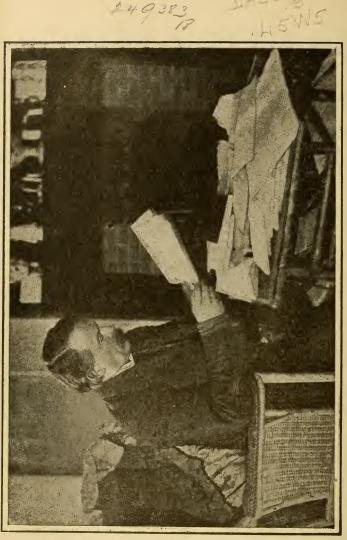
## LLOYD GEORGE A MAN OF THE PEOPLE

BY

## DAVID WILLIAMSON



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THE PRIME MINISTER IN HIS WELSH HOME.

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#### CHAPTER I

DAVID LLOYD GEORGE, Prime Minister of Great Britain, is a man of the people. That is why the people regard him as their champion. He first looked on life through the windows of a humble home in Manchester, and he has never forgotten those early days when his widowed mother had to use every penny to the best advantage of her young family. His father was a Welshman who came to England to work in Liverpool as a schoolmaster. His early death occurred when David Lloyd George was only two years old.

#### A Story of his Childhood.

The future Prime Minister was born fifty-four years ago. When he was only a year old, his life was in peril through a severe attack of croup. A doctor, Dr. George Griffith, was summoned to the little farmhouse where the child lay ill. Through a snowstorm the doctor hurried to the house, and had the joy of seeing his patient recover. "I never dreamt that in saving the life of that little child, as

he lay unconscious in the wicker cradle on that farm hearth, I was saving the life of one of our national leaders," said Dr. Griffith recently.

#### His Boyhood and Education.

Mr. Lloyd George's mother, a Welsh-woman with an intense love of her native land, returned to the Welsh village of Llanystumdwy after the death of her husband. Her brother, Mr. Richard Lloyd, showed the most kindly interest in the family of little children and did all he could to secure a good education for them. This old uncle rejoices to-day in the high honours gained by his nephew, who has all through his busiest years kept up a constant correspondence with him. Mr. Lloyd's message of congratulation, when David Lloyd George became Prime Minister, was one of the first to reach him in London.

#### Admirer of Lincoln and Garibaldi.

The boy's education was gained in the village school, and his bright intelligence was increased by his uncle's intense interest in politics and the affairs of the day. Lloyd George was a great reader, and devoured histories and biographies with an eagerness that soon exhausted the village supply. He had his heroes, and among them were Garibaldi, the saviour of Italy, and Abraham Lincoln, the bright star in the firmament of America's great men. Italy and her history have always possessed the deep-

est interest for Lloyd George and no one rejoiced more heartily than when Italy cast in her lot with the Allies in the summer of 1915. As for Lincoln, he took the opportunity of sending a special message to the United States for "Lincoln Day" in 1917. "To my mind," he wrote, "Abraham Lincoln was one of the very first of the world's statesmen." He continued, "I believe that the battle we have been fighting is at bottom the same battle which your countrymen fought under Lincoln's leadership more than fifty years ago." He struck the note which is characteristic of the whole trend of his thought-love of freedom. "'Our armies,' said Lincoln, 'are ministers of good, not of evil.' So do we believe. And through all the carnage and suffering and conflicting motives of the Civil War Lincoln held steadfastly to the belief that it was the freedom of the people to govern themselves which was the fundamental issue at stake. So do we to-day," said Mr. Lloyd George. "For when the people of Central Europe accept the peace which is offered them by the Allies, not only will the Allied peoples be free as they have never been before, but the German peoples, too, will find that in losing their dream of an Empire over others, they have found self-government for themselves."

#### Becomes a Lawyer.

Lloyd George decided to become a lawyer, and, although he was only able to pay the fees of his

5



MISS MEGAN LLOYD GEORGE AND A BRITISH SAILOR COMBINE TO HELP THE FRENCH FLAG DAY. training by living in the most frugal manner, he was at last successful and passed his examinations by the time he was twenty-one.

#### A Defender of the Oppressed.

It was soon after he was qualified as a solicitor that he attracted public notice by his action in a case which aroused much feeling in the neighbourhood of his home in Wales. An old quarryman on his deathbed had begged his relatives to bury him in the grave where a beloved daughter had been buried. But the vicar would not allow this, and had a grave dug in a part where it was the custom to bury suicides. The villagers, in their just wrath, appealed to Mr. Lloyd George to help them. He found out that the grave was the property of the quarryman, and advised them to demand re-burial in his rightful grave. "But supposing the vicar will not open the gates?" asked the men. "Then," said Mr. Lloyd George, "break down the wall, force your way into the churchyard, and bury the quarryman by the side of his daughter." This was done, and, what was more important, the action was upheld in a court of law. Such a triumph gained fame for the young solicitor as a champion of the poor; and the incident was a foreshadowing of his whole future career.

#### His Home Life in London.

Having married a Welsh woman when he was twenty-five, he came up to London to carry on his work as a solicitor. He lived in a modest home on the outskirts of the metropolis, and there his children—two sons and three daughters—were brought up in simple ways. One daughter, greatly beloved, died some years ago. The two sons went into the Army at the beginning of the war. The elder son had made good progress in his profession as an engineer, but threw up his position when the call of his country came for volunteers.

#### His Sons in the Army.

Speaking of his sons, Mr. Lloyd George said: "I should have been sorry to ask a nice honest upright lad to risk his life for the greed of gain. I could not have done it—my two boys are in the new Army —two as nice boys as you will find anywhere." Gwilym and Richard Lloyd George joined the Royal Welsh Fusiliers, and their good service soon gained for them promotion. The elder is now a Major. Of the daughters, the younger is best known to the British public, for she has been a frequent companion of her famous father. Since the war, Mrs. Lloyd George and her daughters have worked hard on behalf of many charities.

#### He enters Parliament.

Stating briefly the public career of Mr. Lloyd George, one may add that he entered Parliament in 1890, being elected Liberal Member for Carnarvon—the historic capital of Wales. He has been

re-elected at each successive contest, with large majorities. His long experience as a Member has helped his success, for the House of Commons' procedure requires years of study in order that a man may become master of it. In these years the young Welshman was only eager to speak on behalf of the down-trodden or oppressed. He had the most intense admiration for Gladstone, and said the other day that in his political life he has sought to tread in the path which Gladstone hewed out. If there was any wrong done to the poor man, Mr. Lloyd George was quick to claim its redress.

#### A Great Actor appreciates his Eloquence.

After ten years as a Member, Mr. Lloyd George had gained confidence in his own powers, and began to take a more frequent part in debate. He crossed swords again and again with the redoubtable Joseph Chamberlain, and obtained several successes without making enemies of those whom he opposed. The Liberals began to see in him "a man with a future." A little story of Sir Henry Irving will show how the young politician was impressing people. Mr. Lloyd George was speaking in the great Free Trade Hall, Manchester, and was introduced to the audience of 5,000 people as "a fiery young Welshman." It happened that Sir Henry Irving was acting in Manchester, and he entered the hall in the midst of the proceedings. The great actor stood just inside the doorway, close to the platform, and was abso-



A photograph taken when both were Second Lieutenants. The elder is now a Major.

lutely fascinated by the speaker, hardly moving a muscle all the time the orator was speaking. When Mr. Lloyd George ended, Sir Henry Irving drew a long deep breath and muttered "Very fine! Very fine!" and returned to the theatre. By the way, Mr. Lloyd George is very fond of an occasional visit to the theatre, although this recreation has come to him late in life.

#### A Cabinet Minister at Forty-two.

The Liberals came into power in 1905. Sir Henry Campbell-Bannerman became Prime Minister, and without any hesitation invited Mr. Lloyd George to be a member of his Cabinet. The office he held was President of the Board of Trade, and his work was very important in connection with the commerce of the country. It was a great step forward-a Cabinet Minister at the age of forty-two-but Mr. Lloyd George soon showed such high ability that Parliament and the country acknowledged he was "the right man in the right place." He was tactful in the management of employers and employed, never forgetting the conditions under which the working men of Great Britain do their daily labour, and eager to help them in every possible way. He was very alert in picking up the manifold threads of a great State department, and in the House of Commons he won golden opinions by his able speeches. "During the time the right honourable gentleman has been at the Board of Trade," said one of his chief opponents, "the Opposition, on almost every occasion, has supported and agreed with his proposals."

#### Becomes Chancellor of Exchequer.

When Mr. Asquith became Prime Minister in 1908, on the grave illness of Sir Henry Campbell-Bannerman, Mr. Lloyd George was made Chancellor of the Exchequer. This was in 1908, and it meant that a man who was only forty-five, and had been in Parliament only eighteen years, now wielded the highest financial power in the country. How would he use his opportunity—this successor of Peel, Disraeli, Gladstone, and many other great statesmen? The world had not long to wait for the answer. Mr. Lloyd George's first Budget made a sensation by its daring new ideas and its service to the cause of the poor.

#### Helping the Poor.

Old Age Pensions were instituted, by which any man or woman who had reached the age of seventy and had only a few shillings a week, was now entitled to 5s. weekly from the State. Hundreds of thousands of toil-worn citizens blessed the name of Lloyd George as, for the first time in their old age, they had enough to eat and enough to keep them from the poor-house. The money needed for this and other new developments was obtained by raising the taxation of property. Thus the rich were made to help the poor. The new taxes, of course, were un-

popular, and made Mr. Lloyd George an object of attack in Parliament and the Press. But he stood firm, and the financial strength of Great Britain to-day is one of the results.

#### The Great Insurance Act.

Mr. Lloyd George's greatest achievement as Chancellor of the Exchequer was the National Insurance Act, by which all the workers in the country were insured by the State against illness and unemployment. That was a measure which again aroused strong feeling, but has proved of the highest value and has been imitated by other countries. Mr. Lloyd George had begun a campaign on behalf of the taxation of land, hoping thereby to obtain for the countryman an easier access to the land and a consequent increase of agriculture.

#### "A Minister Given by the People."

A subject which had engrossed his thoughts was the policy of his country towards Ireland. Mr. Lloyd George was a convinced Home Ruler and had an intense desire to see Ireland governing herself. He took part in the important Conference at Buckingham Palace in the summer of 1914, and during the progress of the war he made an earnest attempt to solve this old problem. All through his career you see his enthusiasm for the rights of small nations and his eagerness to benefit the people from whom he had sprung. As Dr. Johnson said of William Pitt, "He was a Minister given by the people to the King," and his lifelong ambition has been to serve the people, defend the weak, and defeat the oppressor.

The War, which was casting its dark shadows in July, 1914, was certain to find new and strange tasks for Lloyd George, and fortunately he was ready for them, as the next chapter will show.

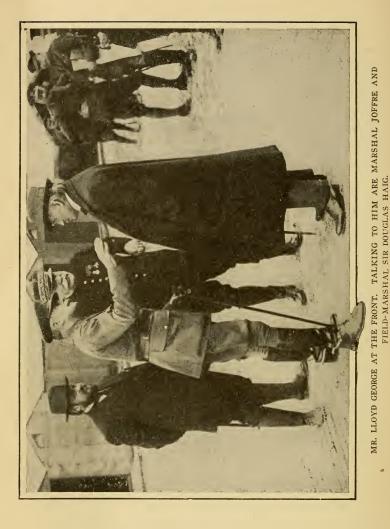
#### CHAPTER II

#### MR. LLOYD GEORGE'S WORK IN WARTIME

On the outbreak of war one of the greatest anxieties of the British Government was to secure the steadiness of the nation's finances. Mr. Lloyd George, as Chancellor of the Exchequer, acted with tremendous energy and speed. He called into conference his friend, Lord Reading, the Lord Chief Justice of England, who had an intimate knowledge of finance, and who for some months gave his whole time to the many problems that arose. The Chancellor was in hourly touch with the Governor of the Bank of England and the most responsible men in the City of London. Mr. Lloyd George surprised those who met him for the first time by the quickness with which he mastered the whole situation and the resourcefulness with which he suggested new methods.

#### Saving the Situation.

Parliament was fortunately sitting when war came, and Mr. Lloyd George was therefore able to propose and carry legislation which relieved the dangers



of the moment. The banks remained closed for four or five days, giving a breathing space which was very useful. Very soon it was decided to have a moratorium, which prevented anything in the nature of a panic. The Stock Exchange was closed for several weeks. Instead of gold, Treasury Notes for £1 and 10s, were issued in millions. The Bank of England stood the extraordinary strain with tranquillity, and gradually the Money Market was adjusted to the new conditions of wartime. Every one in the financial world is ready to praise Mr. Lloyd George for the swift decisions which were taken and acted upon in those momentous days. Men who had opposed his Budgets with violent words about "the little lawyer from Wales" changed their opinion into enthusiastic eulogy of the Chancellor of the Exchequer. All this time, it must be added, he was attending daily meetings of the Cabinet and its War Committees. Only a very tough constitution could have lived through such anxious and laborious days.

#### Averting the Danger.

Speaking in November, 1914, after the strain had lessened, Mr. Lloyd George described how British credit had survived: "What we had to consider was this: Supposing this machine had been left crumpled and broken for the moment—out of repair; if you had left it for a month like that, what would have happened? What did happen? Mills were closed, factories were shut up, and thousands of peo-

ple were thrown out of work. Look at the unemployment chart. Look at what happened in the United States of America in 1907, on the failure of one or two banks. Credit was shaken, hundreds of thousands of people were thrown out of work, and the distress was unutterable. It is really not fair to represent that we are doing something to save a few people, when what we were doing was to save British industry, British commerce, British labour, and British life. What happened? We had no time, and there were two things to be dealt with. The exchanges had completely broken down. Business had come to an end, and the country that depended more on international trade than any other country in the world found international trade at a standstill. We were as completely isolated for the moment as if we had an alien fleet round our shores, because the exchanges had come to an end, and ships were being kept in harbour. We had, first of all, to consider what to do, and here the Government invited the assistance of men of very great experience in every walk of life and every department. We considered it a very great national emergency, and that the consequences of a false step might be very serious for the trade of this country."

#### The "Silver Bullet."

The future historian will probably consider the methods by which this unparalleled crisis was safely overcome as one of the most striking events of the European War. At the beginning of the war Mr. Lloyd George coined the phrase "the silver bullet," referring to the importance of money in waging war. He has never wavered in the view that "men, money, and munitions" are the essential elements of success; and, curiously enough, he has had to do with providing each of these elements. First, as Chancellor of the Exchequer, he gave all his energy to the money position. He acted in consort with eminent Ministers of Finance in the Allied countries, and paid several visits to France in connection with this aspect of the work.

#### Becomes Minister of Munitions.

When the need for an enormous increase of munitions was made known, Mr. Lloyd George volunteered to take the new office of Minister of Munitions in June, 1915. He organised with alertness and sagacity this entirely fresh department of State, calling some of the ablest manufacturers in Great Britain to his assistance. To-day there are about four million persons engaged in munition works, with the result that Great Britain has been able not only to increase her own supply of munitions to a stupendous extent, but has also come to the help of her Allies. Think what the creation of what might be called "the biggest business in the world" must have meant! When the Ministry of Munitions was in full working order-with its great factories which are towns in themselves for size-Lord Kitchener's

death called Mr. Lloyd George to his third post in war-time. He was the country's choice for Secretary of State for War.

#### Succeeds Lord Kitchener as War Secretary.

"I do not like war," he said in one of his speeches at this time, "but there is one thing about this war I like—we have entered into it with a perfectly clear conscience." And so this man, who had dared to take the unpopular side in the South African War and risked his life in uttering his opinions then, now entered the War Office as the head of the military machine. In following the greatest soldier of the day—Lord Kitchener—he faced many difficulties in organisation. But his buoyant courage was undaunted, and it may even be said that fresh tasks were welcomed, so long as he could add to the efficiency of the nation. The great rally of volunteers to the New Army had now come to an end, and a new scheme for adding to the British Army was adopted.

#### A Hater of Prussianism.

Many changes were made under Mr. Lloyd George's régime, and he was frequently encouraging his countrymen to still greater efforts towards victory. Impetuous he might be; impatient of delay he certainly was. But the mainspring of all his energy was a desire to secure a speedy triumph for the Allies in what he believed to be the cause of freedom and righteousness. His whole soul loathed the

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Prussianism which considered Treaties of State as "scraps of paper" to be disregarded when inconvenient. His blood boiled as he—a son of a little nation—saw smaller nations invaded and devastated by a Power which ought to have been their guardian. And, with his entire life-record swayed by the ideal of freedom, he was determined to spare nothing in order to win the peace that rests on mutual trust.

#### An Orator with the World for Audience.

Again and again Lloyd George's trumpet notes of eloquence sounded all over the globe as he insisted on the justice of the Allies' cause in defending the innocent and weak. In hours of depression—and these are certain to arrive in every war—Lloyd George raised the spirits of the Allies by his noble speeches with their beating pulse of humanity which makes "the whole world kin." In France, Italy, Russia—indeed, all over Europe and in the United States, Lloyd George's orations have been at once inspiring and informing.

#### The Road Hog of Europe.

One of his best speeches on the war was given in London in September, 1914. He put the matter in this striking way:

"The Prussian Junker is the road-hog of Europe. Small nationalities in his way are hurled to the roadside, bleeding and broken. Women and children are crushed under the

wheels of his cruel car and Britain is ordered out of his road. All I can say is this: If the old British spirit is alive in British hearts, that bully will be torn from his seat. Were he to win, it would be the greatest catastrophe that has befallen democracy since the day of the Holy Alliance and its ascendancy. They think we cannot beat them. It will not be easy. It will be a long job; it will be a terrible war; but in the end we shall march through terror to triumph. We shall need all our qualities, and every quality that Britain and its people possess—prudence in council, daring in action, tenacity in purpose, courage in defeat, moderation in victory; in all things faith."

#### No Delusions as to the War.

It is well to remember that this speech was uttered after only six weeks of war, when many men were talking of the war being over by Christmas. Yet Mr. Lloyd George had no illusions. "It will be a long job; it will be a terrible war," he said, and his words have come true. It took real courage for a great statesman to say these solemn words of warning at a time when most of the British people were over-confident in their optimism. Although the speech contained this note of warning, its faith and hope rang like a silver trumpet through the country, and did much to hearten the millions who read the orator's words with eager interest.

The phrase "road-hog" which Mr. Lloyd George used in this speech was a reference to the motorist who drove his sixty-horsepower car along the public roads at a furious pace, and cared nothing whether the innocent traveller was ridden over and killed. Sometimes, such a heartless driver was stopped after an accident had happened through his recklessness and pulled down from his car. That is what Mr. Lloyd George meant when he said, "That bully will be torn from his seat." The whole picture, as applied to the enemy's treatment of Europe, was a graphic symbol of the war.

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#### CHAPTER III

#### LLOYD GEORGE AS PRIME MINISTER

IN December, 1916, the Ministry of which Mr. Asquith had been the head for the last eight years, resigned office. The King sent for Mr. Lloyd George when it became obvious that only he could form a united Government. Within forty-eight hours Mr. Lloyd George had called to his banner a remarkably strong body of statesmen to serve under him as Prime Minister. There were in this new Ministry men representing every shade of opinion, united by the one purpose of bringing the war to a speedy and successful issue.

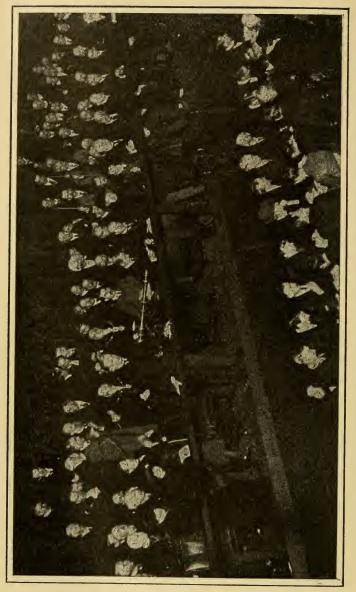
#### A Remarkably Representative Government.

Mr. Balfour, a former Conservative Premier, became Foreign Secretary; Mr. Bonar Law, leader of the Conservative Party, took office as Chancellor of the Exchequer; Mr. Arthur Henderson, one of the trusted leaders of the Labour Party, and several other Labour representatives came into the Ministry. Eminent Liberals sat side by side with colleagues to whom they had been opposed in Parliament all their lives. A small War Cabinet was ap-

pointed to meet "daily and hourly if necessary," to control the policy of the war. New life and vigour were poured into the departments of State, and the Prime Minister went far beyond the usual area of choice in selecting members of the Government. Great "captains of industry," like Sir Joseph Maclay, Lord Devonport, and Mr. Neville Chamberlain gave their services to their country. Nothing but the war and its active prosecution was allowed to be the dominant note. Mr. Lloyd George's extraordinary vitality and originality impressed everybody. From France, Russia, and Itay came messages expressing deep satisfaction at his becoming Premier. In the United States he had long been regarded as "the indispensable man," and his ascent to the highest office in Great Britain was watched in lively sympathy.

#### His First Speech as Premier.

On December 19th, 1916, Mr. Lloyd George addressed the House of Commons for the first time as Prime Minister of the new Government. His throat had given him trouble, and his voice was not at its best. But the hushed attention of Parliament assisted him, and his speech was a success. Its words were soon winging their way to all parts of the world, creating profound depression in enemy countries and raising high hopes among the Allies. At the beginning of the speech Mr. Lloyd George quoted from Abraham Lincoln the words:



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The prime minister helping to raise the  $t_1$ ,000,000 war loan at the guildhall, london.

"'We accepted this War for an object, and a worthy object, and the War will end when that object is attained. Under God, I hope it will never end until that time.'"

Mr. Lloyd George said "Prussia has been a bad neighbour, arrogant, threatening, bullying, litigious, shifting boundaries at her will, taking one fair field after another from weaker neighbours, and adding them to her domain with her belt ostentatiously full of weapons of offence, and ready at a moment's notice to use them."

#### Prussia as a Bad Neighbour.

That graphic description of the perpetual menace of Prussia was felt to be absolutely accurate by Italy and France, whose people have for many years experienced the risks of Germany as "a bad neighbour." Mr. Lloyd George went on to say: "Now that this great war has been forced by the Prussian military leaders upon France, Russia, Italy, and ourselves, it would be folly, it would be cruel folly, not to see to it that this swashbuckling through the streets of Europe to the disturbance of all harmless and peaceful citizens should be dealt with now as an offence against the law of nations." On the subject of Great Britain's relations with her Allies, the Prime Minister said there were two desirable things-"unity of aim and unity of action." The first had been achieved. "Never have Allies worked in better harmony or more perfect accord than the Allies

in this great struggle. There has been no friction and there has been no misunderstanding." Now there remained the need for complete unity of action. "The policy of a common front must be a reality." Mr. Lloyd George ended his great speech with a noble exhortation to secure "the rescue of mankind from the most overwhelming catastrophe that has ever yet menaced its well-being."

#### First Official Visit is to Italy.

A few days after completing his Government, Mr. Lloyd George went to Rome for an important Council between the Allies. He was received with the warmest of welcomes, and the Conference came to important decisions. On his return from Italy, Mr. Lloyd George spoke in London and said:—

"I have just returned from a Council of War of the four great Allied countries upon whose shoulders most of the burden of this terrible war falls. I cannot give you the conclusions; there might be useful information in them for the enemy. There were no delusions as to the magnitude of our task; neither were there any doubts about the result. I think I could say what was the feeling of every man there. It was one of the most businesslike conferences that I ever attended. We faced the whole situation, probed it thoroughly, looked the difficulties in the face, and made arrangements to deal with them—and we separated more confident than ever. All felt that if victory were difficult, defeat was impossible. There was no flinching, no wavering, no faintheartedness, no infirmity of purpose."

Why the Peasants of France and Italy Fight.

In the course of his speech, Mr. Lloyd George said:---

"I passed through hundreds of miles of the beautiful lands of France and of Italy, and as I did so I asked myself this question, Why did the peasants leave by the million these sunny vineyards and cornfields in France-why did they quit these enchanting valleys, with their comfort and their security, their calm in Italy-in order to face the dreary and wild horrors of the battlefield? They did it for one purpose and one purpose only. They were not driven to the slaughter by kings. These are great democratic countries. No Government could have lasted 24 hours that had forced them into an abhorrent war. Of their own free will they embarked upon it, because they knew a fundamental issue had been raised which no country could have shirked without imperilling all that has been won in the centuries of the past and all that remains to be won in the ages of the future. That is why, as the war proceeds, and the German purpose becomes more manifest, the conviction has become deeper in the minds of these people that they must break their way through to victory in order to save Europe from unspeakable despotism. That was the spirit which animated the Allied Conference at Rome last week."

#### The Welcome of Wales.

It was natural that Wales should desire an early visit from her son who had left the little village nearly thirty years ago an obscure young man and who now returned to his native land as Britain's Prime Minister. So a great meeting was held at Carnarvon on February 3rd, and politicians of all parties united in giving Mr. Lloyd George a splendid welcome. The day before the assembly, he had strolled through the village so familiar to him from boyhood and had greeted one after another of the friends of early days. In the Pavilion at Carnarvon there were about 5,000 people who showed the greatest pride and enthusiasm in their hero. His speech was a masterly survey of the situation, and its conclusion was coloured by the picturesque eloquence for which Lloyd George is famed.

"Time is a hesitating and perplexed neutral," he said. "He has not yet decided on which side he is going to swing his terrible scythe. For the moment that scythe is striking both sides with terrible havoc. The hour will come when it will be swung finally on one side or the other. Time is the deadliest of all the neutral powers. Let us see that we enlist him among our Allies." Then with slow and impressive enunciation he concluded:

#### "Winter Wheat is being Sown."

"There are rare epochs in the history of the world when in a few raging years the character, the destiny, of the whole race is determined for unknown ages. This is one. The winter wheat is being sown. It is better, it is surer, it is more bountiful in its harvest than when it is sown in the soft spring time. There are many storms to pass through, there are many frosts to endure, before the land brings forth its green promise. But let us not be weary in welldoing, for in due season we shall reap if we faint not."

#### "Through Terror to Triumph."

With those words of faith and inspiration we may well conclude this brief study of Lloyd George. The picture he left in the minds of all who heard him that day was one which could only have been drawn by a man who had watched the quiet forces of Nature. One thinks of the lad who spent his boyhood on a little Welsh farm, gathering strength and insight for the great task—"the most terrible responsibility that can fall upon the shoulders of any living man." To him now has come the opportunity of serving his country and of lifting the flag of freedom on behalf of the people in all the Allied lands. His whole career is a happy omen for the march of the Allies "through terror to triumph."

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